BME Progression 2018 Programme

Force support to recruitment, retention and progression of BME officers: findings from a survey of forces

November 2014

1. Introduction

This survey was conducted by the College of Policing BME Progression 2018 Programme team to support the design and development of work to improve equality within the police service. The online survey was sent to Human Resources leads in all forces in England and Wales and British Transport Police. The survey was live between June and July 2014. The survey aimed to explore the range of initiatives used by forces to support the recruitment, retention and progression of Black and Minority Ethnic officers and staff to inform future work for the BME Progression 2018 Programme. All 44 forces responded to the survey.

2. Initiatives to support the recruitment, retention and progression of BME officers

Forces were asked to identify the types of initiatives they had delivered within the last three years to support the recruitment, retention and progression of BME officers. They were also asked, to rate the perceived success of each initiative on a scale from very successful to not successful\(^1\). The responses to these questions are set out below.

Most frequently used initiatives

- **Support networks and / or staff associations**
  Nearly all forces responding to this survey (43 of 44) had implemented support networks and / or staff associations for BME officers. Of these 43 forces, 22 perceived these initiatives had been fairly successful in supporting BME officers and twelve forces perceived they had been very successful.

- **Mandatory equality and diversity induction training**
  The majority of forces (39) delivered mandatory equality and diversity training for all new recruits, for all current police officers (32) and for all current police staff (26). The majority of forces that reported delivering these initiatives felt that they were successful and no force felt that they were unsuccessful, although a large number (13) did not know.

- **Targeted recruitment drives**
  Half of the forces (22) reported using a targeted recruitment drive aimed at BME officers. Of these forces, 13 perceived the recruitment drives to be fairly successful and four very successful in improving under representation.

- **Positive action policies / strategies**
  Half of the forces (22) reported using positive action policies / strategies to increase representation of BME officers in specific under-represented areas / departments. Only three of these forces perceived these policies / strategies as very successful in addressing under-representation.

---

\(^1\) The scale included ‘very successful’, ‘fairly successful’, ‘not successful’ and ‘do not know how successful’.
Least frequently used initiatives

- **Engaged a specialist recruitment agency**
  Only five forces had engaged a specialist recruitment agency to recruit BME police officers. Two of these forces felt it had been fairly successful and a further two forces very successful. The remaining force felt that the use of an agency had been unsuccessful.

- **Talent Management**
  Only seven forces reported having a talent management strategy specifically to identify BME officers with the potential to progress. Only one force perceived talent management to be fairly successful, two forces felt the initiative was unsuccessful and four did not know.

- **Development activities**
  Thirteen forces had used development activities aimed at promoting the potential of BME officers. Two of these forces believed development activities had been very successful in assisting with officers’ progression and a further 4 believed they had been fairly successful.

- **BME staff association members on interview and selection panels**
  Fourteen forces used BME staff association members on their interview and selection panels. Four of these forces perceived this initiative to be very successful and a further six forces believed it had been fairly successful.

3. Measuring and evaluating success

Forces were asked what had been the most successful activity aimed at supporting BME officers and staff they had implemented within the last three years. Forces were also asked how they knew these activities were successful, what impact they had and what the key factors were to their success.

- 21 responding forces identified the use of *networks and mentors* as being the most successful activity to support BME officers and staff. Fifteen of these forces reported they evaluated success through informal feedback from their participants. Only two forces had used any formal analysis to measure success. Forces stated the use of networks and mentors had resulted in improved awareness, support and engagement. The key factors for success were the involvement of advisors and engagement of all ranks.

- Eight responding forces made reference to their *recruitment strategies*. Five forces used informal feedback to ascertain how effective this activity had been. Four forces used formal analysis to evaluate its success. Two of the forces stated that the impact of this activity was a change in the recruitment process and a removal of the barriers faced. Key factors for success included the engagement of all ranks, the marketing strategy and the involvement of networks and advisors.

- Six responding forces felt that *workshop and development events* had been the most successful supporting activity. All six forces stated that they measured success through informal feedback. Only one force used a formal survey to evaluate success. Three forces stated that this activity had resulted in improved awareness, support and engagement and two forces believed that it had directly increased representation. Engagement from all ranks and senior officer involvement were seen as key success factors.

4. Identifying issues and impact

Forces were asked what their organisations had done to identify potential issues that impacted on BME officers and staff.
• **Surveys of the BME workforce**
  Twenty-one forces reported using surveys of the BME workforce. Six of these forces believed that the use of surveys had been very successful in identifying issues and 13 forces fairly successful.

• **Focus Groups**
  Eighteen forces reported using focus groups with their BME workforce. Eight of these forces believed the use of focus groups was very successful and five forces fairly successful.

• **Diversity Consultants**
  Twelve forces reported using diversity consultants to identify issues impacting on BME officers and staff. Five of these forces believe the use of consultants had been fairly successful and two forces as very successful.

• **Exit Interviews**
  The majority of forces (37) reported carrying out exit interviews with their BME workforce. Only two forces believed that exit interviews were very successful in identifying the issues impacting on BME officers and staff, fourteen forces believed they had been fairly successful and sixteen did not know.

• **Academic Research**
  Thirteen forces reported carrying out academic research to identify the issues and barriers for their BME workforce. Most of these forces (11) were not aware of how successful this research had been in identifying barriers.

5. Internal and External Barriers

Forces were asked to rate possible internal and external factors on the extent to which they feel they prevent their organisations from becoming more involved in activities to support the recruitment, retention and career progression of BME officers and staff.

• The internal factors rated by responding forces as being the greatest barriers were a lack of internal staff resources, a lack of internal financial resources and the organisational culture.

• The internal factors rated by responding forces as being the least problematic barriers were a lack of expertise within the organisation, a lack of knowledge about good practice and limitations with technology.

• The external barriers rated by responding forces as being the greatest barriers were a lack of BME role models in senior positions, policing not being seen as a viable career by the BME community and a perceived limitation to progress.

• The external barriers rated by responding forces as being the least problematic barriers were a lack of understanding of the police selection process, a lack of appropriate skills of BME candidates and a lack of relevant qualifications from BME candidates.

6. Future activity to support progression

Forces were provided with a list of possible activities to support the progression of BME officers, staff and PCSOs and asked to select those they were actively considering and rate them based on their perceived importance.

• Thirty-two responding forces reported actively considering use of positive action policies / strategies to increase the representation of the BME workforce in underrepresented areas. These activities were rated as the most important by responding forces.

• Twenty-seven responding forces reported considering use of mentoring and coaching for BME officers and staff in the future to improve overall representation. Nineteen responding forces reported considering use of selection and interviewer training for managers, supervisors and staff. These activities were rated as important.
Twenty-four responding forces rated the use of external bodies in interview and selection panels as less important than some of the other initiatives listed.

The activity rated as least important by responding forces was a push for a change towards positive discrimination with only three responding forces rating this as an important future activity.

7. Future activity to support recruitment

Forces were provided with a list of possible activities to support the recruitment of BME officers, staff and PCSOs and asked to select those they were actively considering and rate them based on their perceived importance.

- A key activity being considered by 34 responding forces is a targeted recruitment drive aimed at recruiting BME officers and staff.
- 24 responding forces reported considering engaging with BME media during planned recruitment processes to improve overall representation. On average, this activity was rated as important by the responding forces.
- 23 responding forces are actively considering training for managers/supervisors/staff who are involved in recruitment and selection.
- A robust approach to the use of sections 158 and 159 of the Equality Act 2010 was being actively considered by 16 forces and was on average rated as important by the responding forces.
- Overall, forces rated the use of targets for recruiting BME officers and staff and the introduction of external monitors to the recruitment process as less important than some of the other initiatives listed.
- The activity rated as least important by responding forces was a push for change towards positive discrimination.

8. Secondment opportunities

Forces were asked whether they would consider offering secondment opportunities to officers outside their force and whether they would allow their officers to be seconded to other forces to take advantage of development opportunities.

- 30 out of 43 forces would consider offering a temporary promotion to BME individuals seconded to their force as a development opportunity. 13 out of 43 force forces would not consider temporary promotions to seconded officers or staff.
- 32 out of 43 forces would consider offering a specialist post on a temporary basis to an officer seconded to their force as a development opportunity. Eleven out of 43 forces would not consider offering any specialist posts to seconded staff.
- 39 out of 43 forces would consider releasing one of their officers or staff on secondment to another force on temporary promotion as a development opportunity. Only four out of 43 forces would not consider supporting this opportunity.
- 39 out of 42 forces would consider allowing one of their officers or staff to be seconded to another force to take advantage of a specialist post. Only three out of 42 forces would not consider supporting this opportunity.
9. Additional Support and Information

Forces were asked what support they would like from the College of Policing and from the BME Progress 2018 Programme to support them in the future.

- 31 forces said they wanted the College and Programme to support them by identifying, sharing and providing examples of good or effective practice.

- Eight forces indicated they would like some guidance in relation to the implementation of positive action and specifically s.158 and s.159 of the Equality Act 2010.

- Five forces stated that they wanted the College to provide wider support to BME officers, outside the force. This support was generally in relation to the provision of mentors or role models and development opportunities such as secondments.

- Five forces suggested that the College should either review or make amendments to recruitment processes.

- Other suggestions included improved regional collaboration, increasing the delivery of leadership programmes and notifying forces of development opportunities.